

WE CLAIM:

1. A method of routing an article of paper mail by a postal authority, comprising:
at said postal authority, reading from said article a machine-readable indicia and
producing data corresponding thereto;

5 consulting a database record to identify a physical address corresponding to at
least a portion of said data; and
directing said mail to said physical address.

2. The method of claim 1 that additionally includes printing said physical address
10 on said mail after consulting said database.

3. The method of claim 1 in which the reading comprises reading with a sensor
comprising rows and columns of sensing elements.

15 4. An envelope having machine readable indicia thereon corresponding to a
delivery address, the envelope not having printed thereon a textual delivery address.

5. An envelope having steganographically encoded thereon an optically
discernable indicia that indicates, to a suitably authorized detector, data that identifies a
20 device used in franking said envelope.

6. An envelope having encoded thereon a fragile digital watermark representing
plural bits of digital data, said watermark being designed to evidence reproduction by
scanning and printing.

25 7. An envelope having encoded thereon a machine readable indicia that indicates,
to suitably equipped devices, that image data corresponding to said envelope should not
be reproduced.

8. An envelope having steganographically encoded thereon a digital watermark representing postage.

9. The envelope of claim 8 in which the steganographic encoding takes the form
5 of printing on said envelope.

10. The envelope of claim 9 in which said printing is with an ink designed for sensing in the ultraviolet or infrared spectra.

10 11. The envelope of claim 8 in which said encoding takes the form of texturing
on the surface of said envelope.

12. A method comprising:

receiving an envelope of paper mail through the postal system by an addressee at
15 a delivery address specified on the article;

after receipt, presenting the envelope to a processing device that includes an optical sensing system; and

thereby triggering the device to produce a response corresponding to machine readable indicia formed on said envelope.

13. The method of claim 12 in which the response comprises updating a contact database on said device with information corresponding to a sender of said envelope.

14. The method of claim 12 in which the response comprises sending a delivery
25 confirmation to a sender of said envelope.

15. The method of claim 12 in which the response includes directing an internet web browser to an internet destination.

30 16. The method of claim 12 that further includes:

receiving additional information or entertainment from a second internet resource;

presenting said additional information or entertainment to said addressee.

18. The method of claim 16 in which the first and second internet resources are different internet resources, the first internet resource responding with an address of said second internet resource.

19. An envelope having formed thereon two machine readable indicia, a first of said indicia being a franking mark applied by a first party, the second of said indicia conveying data associated with an authorized user of said envelope, the first and second indicia cooperating to confirm that use of said envelope by the first party is authorized.